

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



**ASSOCIATION of
GOVERNMENTS**

Main Office

818 West Seventh Street

12th Floor

Los Angeles, California

90017-3435

t (213) 236-1800

f (213) 236-1825

www.scag.ca.gov

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MEETING AGENDA OF THE

WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

**Thursday, September 21, 2006
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

Special Meeting Location:

**Metropolitan Water District
Conference Room 2-456
700 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012**

If members of the public wish to review the attachments or have any questions on any of the agenda items, please contact Dan Grisct at 213.236.1895 or grisct@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG, in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), will accommodate persons who require a modification of accommodation in order to participate in this meeting. If you require such assistance, please contact SCAG at (213) 236-1868 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to enable SCAG to make reasonable arrangements. To request documents related to this document in an alternative format, please contact (213) 236-1868.

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Agenda
WATER POLICY TASK FORCE
September 21, 2006

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1.0 CALL TO ORDER

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Members of the public desiring to speak on an agenda item or another item, but within the purview of this Task Force, must notify staff to the Task Force prior to the meeting. At the discretion of the Chair public comments may be limited to three minutes.

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Owing to a recording system malfunction, minutes are not available for the June 8, 2006 meeting.

4.0 PRESENTATION ITEMS FOR THE TASK FORCE

4.1 The Value of Infiltrated Stormwater

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Bo Cutter, a faculty member in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of California, Riverside, and member of the Task Force, prepared a research paper on the valuation of stormwater infiltration. Dr. Cutter will discuss his findings, giving special attention to the connections between the costs of water in current agency portfolios, groundwater recharge and water supply reliability in one part of the SCAG region.

4.2 Alluvial Fan Flooding

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Susan Lien Longville, Director of the Water Resources Institute at CSU San Bernardino and member of the recent California Floodplain Task Force, will discuss steps being taken to implement certain recommendations made by that Task Force, emphasizing alluvial fan flooding risks of concern within the SCAG region.

4.3 Task Force Guidance on Water Outcome Indicators for the Regional Comprehensive Plan's Water Chapter

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Outcome indicators will be an important element in the Water Chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Plan now in development. These indicators will create a context for tracking changes in selected areas of water use and management in the region. Staff is seeking a review and comments by Task Force members on draft indicators prior to further preparation of the Chapter.

4.4 Control Measure Strategies for Meeting a Trash Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) in the Los Angeles Basin

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In the coming months, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Board is expected to once again adopt a Trash TMDL for the Los Angeles River, once it satisfactorily complies with a court mandate that requires the Board to conduct a new CEQA process prior its adoption of new trash rules for the River. Trash rules for Ballona Creek, however, are currently in effect. Agency representatives will discuss current approaches for eventual compliance with trash rules on the Los Angeles River.

Speakers: Mary Ann Lutz, a Monrovia Councilmember and Regional Board member, will provide comments on the status of Board's policy process; Maurice Oillataguerre with Glendale's Public Works Department will brief the Task Force on a trash control strategy developed by the cities of Glendale, Burbank, Pasadena and LaCanada-Flintridge; Gerry Greene with Downey Public Works and a Task Force member will discuss strategies among several cities, including Downey, Signal Hill, Arcadia, Monrovia and Duarte.

4.5 Proposed Perchlorate Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)

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On August 7, 2006, the California Department of Health Services proposed a new drinking water standard or MCL for perchlorate, a groundwater contaminant that has threatened water supplies in many cities of the SCAG region. Grace Burgess, Executive Director of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority will brief the Task Force on the impact of this proposed change in one groundwater basin. Mic Stewart, Water Quality Manager at Metropolitan Water District, will comment on this proposal from the surface water perspective.

5.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

6.0 STAFF REPORT

7.0 TASK FORCE INFORMATION SHARING

8.0 COMMENT PERIOD

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

The next Task Force meeting will be held on November 16, 2006 or at another time designated by the Task Force.

**Lunch is sponsored by the
METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT**

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

September 21, 2006

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *The Value of Infiltrated Stormwater*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive for future policy consideration.

BACKGROUND:

Please find the following background memorandum prepared by Prof. Cutter.

TO: SCAG WATER POLICY TASK FORCE
FROM: BOWMAN CUTTER, UC RIVERSIDE
SUBJECT: GROUNDWATER RECHARGE VALUATION
DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

Summary

Southern California faces a variety of water-related challenges. Throughout the region, local governments are struggling to meet current and future Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) regulations and water quality standards. In addition, Southern California faces uncertainty in its water supply due to climate change, emerging sources of pollution and rising regulatory stringency. Increased infiltration of rainfall to recharge groundwater and improve water quality is a key goal of the Water Augmentation Study (WAS) initiated by the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council (LASGRWC). Large-scale installation of stormwater infiltration devices (Best Management Practices – BMPs) could lead to a variety of economic benefits including decreased costs of stormwater management, aesthetic benefits, property value increases, and benefits from increasing the quantity and quality of the water supply. I am working, with assistance from LASGRWC and other institutions involved in the WAS, on several research projects to quantify these benefits. However, this study only considers the water-supply benefits of increased infiltration. I have constructed a dynamic uncertainty model of water supply and demand in the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) service area (except San Diego and some of Ventura) to estimate the consumer benefits of adding a small amount of additional recharge after subtracting treatment, pumping, and distribution costs. I find the gross social benefit of additional recharge ranges from \$713 per Acre-Foot (AF) to \$888/AF depending on aquifer capacities. This recharge value is a gross benefit, so the flow of benefits from a recharge project would have to be compared against project capital costs to determine the extent to which water-supply benefits defray the costs of a project. The higher than usual recharge values found in this study are largely due to applying new statistical methods to the analysis of water supply variation.

Discussion

The central idea of the WAS is that stormwater can be treated as a resource and not a waste product. As part of that viewpoint, the WAS has extensively studied different methods of infiltrating stormwater. This strategy both decreases the stormwater volumes that need to be handled by the stormwater system and adds to our groundwater supply. For most pollutants, the decreased volume of stormwater from infiltration will make it cheaper and easier to meet TMDL goals. The decreased costs of attaining regulatory goals could end up being the largest benefit of stormwater infiltration solutions. However, the pollution reduction benefit is likely to vary a great deal depending on the geographic area and the relative cost of other solutions. (I am engaged in research to analyze these benefits in the Sun Valley area). The research in this study instead concentrates on the water-supply benefits of increased recharge.

Many analyses of water supply projects – infiltration or otherwise- examine water costs and benefits largely from a public agency perspective. This research instead seeks to value additional water supply benefits from the social perspective (consumers and suppliers). I adopt a social perspective because the water rate and cost structure faced by water suppliers likely make their financial return from investing in recharge projects

significantly lower than the overall social benefits. Water rates are usually set based on historical costs and do not fully take into account the consumer benefits of increased water supply certainty that this analysis indicates is the chief benefit of increased recharge.

One possibility for valuing increased infiltration is to use the MWD replacement water rate and subtract pumping, treatment and distribution costs. My research indicates that the MWD replacement rate is lower than the value of increased recharge once supply uncertainty is taken into account. The Southern California water portfolio includes local sources, State Water Project water, Colorado River water, and water from the Owens valley. The supply of water from some of these sources – especially the State Water Project – varies considerably from year to year. Southern California water agencies have detailed plans to meet future demands under all the conditions seen in the hydrologic record. However, time-series statistical modeling techniques indicate that there is a small, but positive probability of worse multi-year droughts than seen in the hydrologic record.¹ The possibility of these shortfalls increases the value of groundwater recharge and reserves (or other storage) because reserves diminish the probability that consumers would face a shortage. Note that the probability of any shortfall is low even with the new statistical models, but the cost of any significant consumer shortage is very high according to consensus estimates of consumer water demand curves in Southern California.

The relationship between supply uncertainty and the value of groundwater explains the range of groundwater recharge values in the study. The value of additional infiltration rises from \$713/AF at 1 million AF (MAF) of available aquifer capacity to \$888/AF at 4 MAF of available capacity. Available capacity means capacity that is developed and can be used for long-term optimal storage. Capacity that is dedicated for yearly use does not count. Additional groundwater recharge and reserves are more valuable when there is more capacity because, with larger aquifer capacity, it is more likely reserves will be available during longer, more severe droughts when they are most valuable.

The analysis makes the strong assumption that no new major water supplies will become available to the Southern California region. Specifically, the underlying water supply model (the UC Davis CALVIN model) assumes 2020 facilities and operating rules. Major breakthroughs in the cost and availability of desalination or new large water transfers would result in lower values. The modeling approach developed in this research could incorporate these scenarios if sufficient information and resources were available.

There are also significant threats to current supplies. Climate change impacts on the western snow pack and delta operations could result in significant increases in supply uncertainty. Also, stricter water quality regulation and/or emerging pollutants could also increase supply uncertainty. Any increase in supply uncertainty increases the value of storage capacity. This research does not include these sources of uncertainty; in this way, the study may underestimate the supply uncertainty and underestimate groundwater reserve and recharge values.

This research provides a range of groundwater recharge values under baseline conditions. The range of values- from \$713 to \$888 per AF- is higher than generally used in Southern California. These values are a social benefit and likely exceed the financial return to water agencies from additional groundwater recharge. Therefore, this research implies that other public agencies should subsidize recharge projects- they cannot be solely a water agency financial responsibility. These benefit values can be used for any project in the MWD area (less San Diego and some of Ventura) that results in additional groundwater infiltration to usable aquifers. However, infiltration projects will often have other benefits such as pollution reduction that should also be included in a project-specific benefit-cost analysis.

¹ These approaches have been used in the financial economics option literature. Since groundwater reserves have a quasi-option value in that they can be saved until they are most valuable, and then used, the statistical methods are useful in this area.

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

September 21, 2006

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *Alluvial Fan Task Force*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Ask the Energy and Environment Committee to recommend to the Regional Council that SCAG participate in the work of the Alluvial Fan Task Force by providing relevant land use information and by having a SCAG liaison designated by the Executive Director.

BACKGROUND:

The Alluvial Fan Task Force (AFTF) is a project funded jointly by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Pre-Mitigation Disaster Planning program and the Department of Water Resources (DWR). This is one element in the implementation of AB 2141, a law signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2004 and a project slated to begin in late 2006. This new Task Force was one of the recommendations contained in the 2002 Final Report of the California Floodplain Management Task Force, an effort endorsed by SCAG in 2003. In that endorsement SCAG President Bev Perry noted the loss of lives and property in the 2003 flooding that followed wildfires in the region by noting that "... it is important for communities in this region that local land use planning and policy decisions protect lives and property in areas at risk from new flooding in alluvial fan floodplains."

Alluvial fans are prevalent in Southern California, as is the alluvial fan flooding that has occurred throughout California's history. The AFTF is charged with reviewing the state of knowledge and information on alluvial fan flooding risks and developing a Model Local Ordinance for managing and reducing these risks that can be used in affected local communities. The Model Ordinance is intended to reference practical tools for guiding development on these floodplains that reduces the cost of future emergency response and rehabilitation following flood events and to protect the watershed values of floodplains to the maximum extent possible.

The Alluvial Fan Task Force will set up a collaborative process for doing this work with affected local governments, along with state and federal agencies, environmental organizations and the building industry. Those areas slated for future growth in alluvial fan areas will receive priority attention. DWR is working with the Water Resources Institute (WRI) at California State University San Bernardino to coordinate the activities of the Alluvial Fan Task Force. SCAG will be asked to assist the AFTF with the provision of GIS and other data and with the designation of a SCAG liaison to the AFTF.

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

September 21, 2006

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Project Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *Task Force Guidance on Preparation of the Regional Comprehensive Plan: Outcomes and Indicators for Regional Water Objectives*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Provide staff with guidance on outcomes and indicators needed for the preparation of the Water Chapter of a new Regional Comprehensive Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Water Priorities in the SCAG Region: Clean and reliable water in the watersheds of the SCAG region is essential to the future quality of life in our growing region. The projected growth in population and employment is certain to increase the water challenges the region will face in the coming years. Some of these challenges include the increase of stormwater and urban runoff pollution, limited interagency collaboration and initiatives within shared watersheds, the continuing need to import water supplies from watersheds beyond the region, the shortage of natural spaces within urban land use plans, the replacement and expansion of water infrastructure systems, and the advancement of water conservation efforts.

Water Chapter Statement of Regional Goals/Outcomes: Encourage the creation and growth of environmentally sustainable communities in which planning and policies support the sound development and management of water resources and encourage economic vitality throughout the region. These practices would include:

- a) Integrated regional water management is used across all levels of government within the SCAG region, incorporating imported water, urban runoff and stormwater, wastewater and other reclaimed water supplies;
- b) Water resources planning that mitigates and reduces the impacts of climate change on water supplies and reliability;
- c) Local land use policies and practices are established that prevent flooding risks, maximize stormwater capture and minimize water impairments in the SCAG region.
- d) Water conservation policies and practices are used throughout the SCAG region, especially with exterior uses of potable water for irrigation.

Draft Indicators: As a basis for creating some measurements of progress towards envisioned regional goals or outcomes, staff has identified the following draft indicators. Staff seeks Task Force feedback and discussion on these draft indicators:

- Reduced water impairment listings requiring pollution control plans (Total Maximum Daily Loads, or TMDLs)
- Reduced salt and organic levels in imported water supplies

Draft Indicators (continued):

- Increased implementation of comprehensive watershed management plans
- Lowered per capita consumption of water
- Increased water storage capacities in surface and groundwater reservoirs
- Increased implementation of habitat conservation plans and constructed wetlands
- Increased inclusion of natural areas in land use plans for water infiltration and cleaning
- Increased use of drought-tolerant plantings and landscapes
- Use of flood control measures in areas with substantial flooding risks
- Increased per capita production of local water supplies within the region
- Increased water reclamation and reuse
- Reduced beach closures owing to health risks from polluted runoff
- Increased use of weather-based irrigation systems in communities
- Increased use of tiered water rates to constrain water use

In support of these goals and indicators, staff has developed a number of actions that may be included in the Water Chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Plan, including:

- **Local Land Use Policies**
 - Implementation of open space and green belts within new and infill developments for water cleaning and infiltration
 - Implementation of street designs that retain and infiltrate stormwater runoff (City of Downey, Village Homes in Davis, CA are examples)
 - Requirement of native and drought-tolerant landscaping
 - Incentives for water retention features such as cisterns and other small systems
- **Education and Outreach Programs**
 - Implementation of water education and outreach programs for community leaders and educators
- **Water Quality**
 - Implementation of integrated watershed management plans and governance
 - Issuance of discharge permits on a watershed basis
 - Improved coordination of water quality regulations with watershed and community institutions
 - Improvement of water quality in the State Water Project
 - Reduction of salt levels in the Colorado River Aqueduct supplies
- **Water Supply, Reliability and Storage**
 - Increased water conservation and water recycling programs (i.e., desalters)
 - Increased use of groundwater storage and the development of new storage capacities. (This could include development and implementation of infiltration, recharge and injection technologies.)
 - Increased water storage capacities consistent with regional water reliability
- **Advanced Water Management Techniques**
 - Continuation of ocean desalination research and development
 - Greater use of voluntary water transfers between basins
- **Water & Energy Relation**
 - Increased generation of renewable energy supplies in the region's water systems

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

September 21, 2006

TO: ***Members of the Water Policy Task Force***

FROM: ***Daniel E. Griset, Project Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov***

SUBJECT: ***Control Measure Strategies for Meeting a Trash Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) in the Los Angeles Basin***

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive for future policy consideration.

BACKGROUND:

In 2001 when the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for trash it established a policy that the Los Angeles River and Ballona Creek would be impaired by any amount of trash above zero after ten years of implementation. A group of 22 cities challenged the TMDL and consequently the Superior Court of San Diego County invalidated the TMDL on various grounds.

Later, the 4th Appellate District Court has upheld the lower court's invalidation of the TMDL to the extent that the lower court's decision is based on noncompliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Appeals Court determined that the Board will need to complete an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the TMDL to proceed since construction and maintenance of the trash control devices will have environmental impacts. The Appeals Court also rejected arguments by the cities that the TMDL lacked a study of the assimilative capacity of the river (i.e., an evaluation as to whether some trash would be acceptable). The Court also rejected arguments that the TMDL required a cost/benefit analysis or the consideration of economic factors (per Water Code sections 13267 & 13241, respectively).

Last week the Board received a court ruling that its effort to comply with the court mandates was still in question. As a result, the Board did not adopt, as expected, new Trash rules for the Los Angeles River. It was clear, however, that the Board will take action on these rules in the near future.

Against this background, various public agencies are developing their strategies and measures for controlling trash within their jurisdictions. Considering the regional significance of trash in stormwater flows and the costs associated with its reduction, these planning efforts are now of interest to other agencies within the SCAG region.

Caltrans and Proposed Trash Rules:

The impact of the Los Angeles River TMDL on Caltrans and its operation of state roadways is material, amounting to a trash loading of nearly 8,000 cubic feet per year. In order to comply with the proposed TMDL Caltrans has developed its own treatment units called *gross solids removal devices* (GSRD) that are designed to capture 100% of the all solids that can be retained by a mesh screen with

openings 0.2 in. (5 mm) square for a one-year design storm. In addition, the units are designed to drain completely within 72 hours to avoid mosquito breeding.

One constraint affecting the widespread implementation of this GSRD device is the often limited rights-of-way in older parts of the Caltrans system. In these settings Caltrans has asked SCAG to assist with the formation of inter-agency partnerships through which more comprehensive control measures can be developed on a collaborative basis.

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

September 21, 2006

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *Proposed Perchlorate Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)*

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Energy and Environment Committee recommend to the Regional Council that SCAG support the perchlorate MCL of 6 parts per billion (ppb) proposed by the California Department of Health Services.

BACKGROUND:

The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) has proposed a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for perchlorate in drinking water of 6 parts per billion. If the proposed standard is adopted, public water systems cannot provide drinking water that exceeds a MCL without notifying their customers and must take steps to bring their water supply into compliance with drinking water regulations. This proposal precedes a public comment period that ends on November 3.

Studies have concluded that perchlorate ingestion can harm pregnant women and their developing fetuses, as well as children.

Perchlorate, primarily used in rocket fuel, explosives, fireworks, road flares and airbag inflation systems, is an inorganic chemical that is known to interfere with iodine uptake of the thyroid gland. A reduction in iodine uptake can result in decreased production of thyroid hormones, which are needed for prenatal and postnatal growth and development, as well as for normal metabolism and mental function in the adult.

State law requires CDHS to establish a MCL for perchlorate that protects public health, but also is as close to the Public Health Goal (PHG) as technically and economically feasible. PHGs are levels of contaminants in drinking water that would not be expected to pose a significant health risk to individuals consuming an average of two liters a day of water over a 70-year lifetime. A PHG for perchlorate was established in 2004 by the California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). OEHHA's PHG for perchlorate is 6 ppb, the same as the MCL being proposed and consistent with the findings of a 2005 report on the chemical by the National Academy of Sciences.

CDHS began monitoring for perchlorate in 1997. In 1999, CDHS required water systems to monitor for the chemical as an "unregulated contaminant" to collect information on the extent of contamination throughout the state. Results from nearly 7,000 drinking water sources in California showed perchlorate to be present in approximately 450 sources in approximately 110 public water systems.

Perchlorate has been detected primarily in groundwater wells located in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Sacramento counties. The chemical has also been detected in the Colorado River, an important source of water for drinking and irrigation in Southern California.

The proposed regulation, accompanying documents and information about submitting comments and the public hearing are on the CDHS Web site at

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/chemicals/perchl/perchlindex.htm>.